

Introduction

The Planning Context is a summary of those historical factors and trends that influence the delivery of parks and recreation services throughout the City. This section provides a summary of: the population, demographic and land use trends in Fairfax; an overview of the regional recreation context; an ordinances and policies review; parks and recreation budget history and overview; previous studies summaries; and a future trends analysis.

Population Trends

An overall understanding of the population trends of Fairfax is necessary to identify the present and predicted future needs for parks and recreation services and facilities. The City of Fairfax Community Development & Planning Department has developed detailed analyses of the 2010 US Census and trends in its Comprehensive Plan Update Briefing Paper and document titled “The People – Our Demographics.” The text in this section is adapted from that document.

Table A-1 illustrates the population trends for the City from 1970 to 2030. These tables use US Census Bureau data for past figures, ESRI Business Analyst Solutions for 2012, and projections from the Virginia Employment Commission, Labor Market Information for 2020 and 2030. Trends indicate that the population has increased slightly in each ten year period since 1980 and that the population will remain steady over the next few decades. This conclusion is consistent with findings by the City of Fairfax Community Development & Planning Department in their Comprehensive Plan Update Briefing Paper.

Table A- 1: Fairfax, Virginia Population History and Projections (1970-2030)

						Projections		
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2012	2020	2030
City of Fairfax	21,970	19,390	19,622	21,498	22,565	23,188	23,751	24,758
10 Year Growth %		-11.70%	1.20%	9.56%	4.96%		5.25%	4.23%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. ESRI Business Analyst Online for 2012. Virginia Employment Commission Labor Market Information for 2020 and 2030								

Table A-2 indicates the household and family size from 1990 to 2017 and indicates that in the City of Fairfax, the average household size increased slightly from 1990 to 2000 and is expected to remain steady at 2.65 into 2017. The average family size for residents in the City of Fairfax is slightly higher than for the United States and the State of Virginia, but lower than Fairfax County. The 2010 average household size is 2.64 as compared to 2.74 for Fairfax County, 2.54 for the State of Virginia, and 2.58 for the U.S.

Table A- 2: Household and Family Size (1990 to 2017)

	Households	Average Household Size				
	2010	1990	2000	2010	2012	2017
USA	116,716,292	2.63	2.59	2.58	2.58	2.58
Virginia	3,056,058	2.75	2.74	2.54	2.54	2.54
Fairfax County	391,627	2.75	2.74	2.74	2.74	2.74
City of Fairfax	8,347	2.60	2.61	2.64	2.64	2.65

Table A-3 shows the median age change from 1990 to 2017. This data indicated a continued aging of the population in the City of Fairfax, Fairfax County, Virginia as a whole, and the United States. The City of Fairfax had a higher median age in 1990 than any of the comparison jurisdictions and has been increasing at a greater rate. By 2017, the median age in the City of Fairfax is projected to be 39.7, approximately two years higher than Fairfax County, Virginia, or the USA, and over six years higher than the median age in 1990.

Table A- 3: Median Age (1990 – 2017)

	1990 ¹	2000 ¹	2010 ¹	2012 ²	2017 ²
USA	32.9	35.3	37.1	37.3	37.8
Virginia	32.6	35.7	37.4	37.6	38.0
Fairfax County	33.1	35.9	37.3	37.5	37.7
City of Fairfax	33.6	37.0	38.9	39.2	39.7
1 - Source: U.S. Census Bureau					
2-Source: ESRI Bis Forecast					

Table A-4 shows the population age 65 and over from 1990 to 2017 and indicates that this age group is continually increasing in percentage from 1990 to 2017 from 10.8% to 15.9% of the. All of the other jurisdictions have a lower percentage of the population in this age cohort with the City currently at approximately 13.7%, the County at 9.8%, the State at 12.2%, and the USA at 13.0% of the population. The percentage of persons over age 65 was significantly higher in Fairfax County than the other jurisdictions.

Table A- 4: Population Age 65 and over (1990-2017)

	1990 ¹		2000 ¹		2010 ²		2017 ²	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
USA	31,241,831	12.6%	34,991,753	12.4%	40,267,984	13.0%	49,179,343	15.2%
Virginia	664,970	10.7%	792,333	11.2%	976,937	12.2%	1,218,889	14.3%
Fairfax County	53,544	6.5%	76,818	7.9%	106,290	9.8%	137,170	11.8%
City of Fairfax	2,135	10.8%	2,753	12.8%	3,088	13.7%	3,885	15.9%
1-Source: U.S. Census Bureau								
2-Source: ESRI Bis Forecast								

Table A-5 identifies the population age 19 and under from 1990 to 2017. The table indicates that in the City of Fairfax the percentage has remained steady, ranging from 21.9% in 1990 to 22.6% in 2000 before beginning a slight decline. This result contrasts to the previous table which identified the growing population over age 65. It should be noted that the percentage of the population age 19 and under in the City of Fairfax is lower than for the County, State, and USA. In 2010 the City of Fairfax had 22.4% of the population within this age cohort as opposed to 26.3% for Fairfax County, 26.1% for the state, and 26.9% for the USA.

Table A- 5: Population Age 19 and Under (1990-2017)

	1990 ¹		2000 ¹		2010 ¹		2017 ²	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
USA	71,321,886	28.7%	80,473,265	28.6%	83,267,556	26.9%	84,788,223	26.17%
Virginia	1,704,603	27.5%	1,937,086	27.4%	2,083,685	26.1%	2,148,959	25.3%
Fairfax County	220,895	27%	266,163	27.4%	285,405	26.3%	297,682	25.6%
City of Fairfax	4,315	21.9%	4,853	22.6%	5,047	22.4%	5,271	21.7%
1-Source: U.S. Census Bureau								
2-Source: ESRI Bis Forecast								

All of this information indicates that the population of Fairfax is older than for the County, State of Virginia, and the United States in terms of their percentages.

Demographic and Land Use Trends

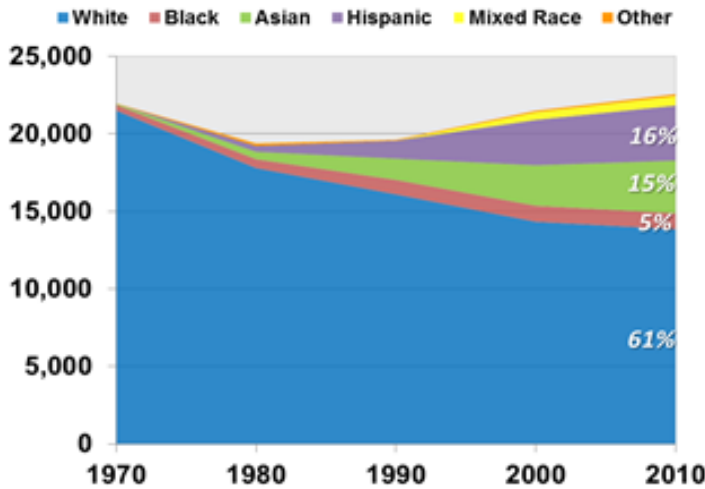
Demographic and Land Use Trends in Fairfax (As identified by City of Fairfax Community Development & Planning Department in their Comprehensive Plan Update Briefing Paper. – The following text is adapted from the City of Fairfax Briefing Paper and edited to trends pertinent to the demand for parks and recreation services and facilities).

The themes of diversification and aging are common throughout the following five trends, and yet each point addressing the issues highlights particular aspects of these changes in their own right. In one way or another, the trends discussed below are interwoven, affecting the direction of the city’s demographic path.

Growth of Ethnic Populations

The City of Fairfax has had a significant reduction in the proportion of the population consisting of Caucasian residents while the African American population has remained constant and other populations have increased (Table A-6). In 2010, the White population has declined to 61 percent compared to 82 percent in 1990. Additionally, over the same time period, the minority population has increased nearly 150 percent compared to a 15 percent increase in population for the city as a whole. Similarly, the Asian community is projected to reach 16 percent of the population by 2016, compared to 7 percent in 1990.

Table A- 6: Racial and Ethnic Population Changes



In absolute numbers, the White population has increased in Fairfax, but it has not kept pace with ethnic minorities. For example, the growth rate of Hispanic and Asian populations far exceeds the growth of White populations in Fairfax. This trend is expected to continue into the future and will have substantial impacts on the City’s future.

Shifting of Age Demographics of the Population

The changes in age demographics in Fairfax have followed a similar pattern to that of both the Northern Virginia region and to that of the United States as a whole. The baby boom that led to the population explosion of Fairfax in the 1950’s, is now leading to the aging of the population. One fourth of households now contain a senior aged 65 or older.

Compared to the region, Fairfax has a lower percentage of residents under the age of 50 and a greater number over the age of 65. Yet, while the median age of Fairfax at 39.1 is higher than that of both the nation and Fairfax County, it is lower than many of its immediate neighbors, such as 44.7 median age in Mantua.

Fairfax has a large concentration of residents in 20-24 age range due to the presence of George Mason University. Also, the proportion of the child population increases through the age ranges which indicate that the City of Fairfax is attracting families. Of additional importance is that the growing minority population has a significantly lower median age (30.5 for the Hispanic population).

With a median age higher than that of the region and the nation, addressing the needs of the aging population will certainly be of great importance to the City of Fairfax. The 80-84 age range is 93 percent higher than the average of Northern Virginia as a whole. The needs of other age ranges, nonetheless, will be quite significant.

Changes in Household Composition

The proportion of households made up of families has decreased significantly in the City of Fairfax from 78 percent in 1980 to 67 percent in 2000¹. However, the decrease has slowed as families still make up two-thirds of households, while single person households make up nearly a quarter of all households. It is also important to note that one third of households currently have a child under the age of 18.

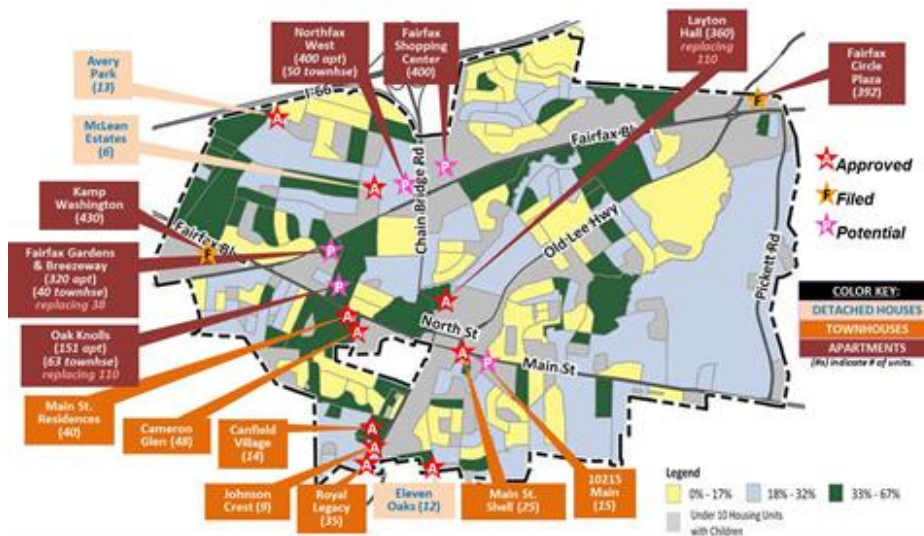
Consistent with regional and national trends, the average household size has decreased in the City of Fairfax from the 1960s through the 1980s. The household size began to stabilize in the 1990s and has started to inch upward since. The growth of minority populations is largely responsible for this increase as these ethnic minorities tend to have significantly larger average household sizes. Hispanic families, for example, have an average household size 70 percent greater than that of Whites.

Student Generation and Housing

The number of students per housing unit in the City of Fairfax is lower than the rest of the county, but it is not clear whether that trend will continue. As noted above, the City is attracting families with children, and the level to which that trend will continue is dependent largely on the type of housing developments in Fairfax as well as the continuation of current housing trends favoring rental units.

Student generation is highest from single family homes at 0.42 students per unit followed by apartments at 0.34. Both townhome and condo student generation is currently quite low at 0.12 and 0.04 respectively. The City has a large number of apartment units in development which could potentially lead to additional student generation².

Figure A- 1: Planned Development and Households with Young Children



¹ United States Census 1980 and 2000.

² “Overview of City of Fairfax Demographic and Development Trends” presentation by Eric Forman, March 13, 2014

The map (Figure A-1) above shows the location and number of planned new development in the City of Fairfax as well as the percentage of households currently with children under the age of 6 (in yellow, blue, and green). Many of the new apartment units are planned in locations that currently have a high percentage of households with children; however, numerous new apartment units are proposed in areas with lower percentages of young children, specifically those along Fairfax Boulevard. New development could lead to a change in demographics for these areas.

Intense Income Growth

The City of Fairfax has experienced a period of substantial growth of income. Since 1980, the median household income has increased markedly. After adjusting for inflation, the median income has increased by approximately 150 percent. This trend is consistent with that of the Northern Virginia region and well above the national average. The City also has a lower poverty rate than that of the region as a whole, and Fairfax has the lowest housing vacancy of any city or county in the nation.

The economic strength of the City of Fairfax is expected to continue. The median income is projected to continue to grow by 11.5 percent by 2016. This growth will provide both opportunities and challenges for the city to ascertain and meet the desires of these residents.

Conclusion

Fairfax is a captivating locale, an attractive place, attractive not only in terms of natural beauty but also in terms of its gravitational pull for people.

Fairfax's diversity provides many opportunities for the future of the City. Many demographic trends are apparent in Fairfax, and many of the upcoming population shifts of the City have been projected assisting in the City's planning efforts.

Fairfax's quality of life is a powerful instrument for economic development, and the city's diverse demographic structures support and enrich its quality of life.

(Text adapted from Briefing Papers and Comprehensive Plan for the City of Fairfax)

Regional Recreation Context

The City of Fairfax is one provider of parks and recreation services in the area. The area is also served by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, Fairfax County Park Authority, Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services, and a variety of adjacent communities, homeowner and civic associations, athletic organizations, and private organizations. Included here are short descriptions of the main providers:

Fairfax County Park Authority

The Park Authority was created by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in 1950 when the Virginia General Assembly passed the Park Authorities Act (Sec. 15.1-1228 to 15.1-1238.1, Ch. 27, Code of Virginia) which permitted counties to establish individual authorities to preserve open space and acquire and develop park facilities throughout the state. The Park Authority has been an important part of the County's landscape since then.

As of 2010, the Park Authority owned over 22,500 acres of parkland in 416 parks that provide stewardship, interpretation, leisure and recreational opportunities through a rich variety of natural resources, facilities and services that enhance the quality of life for all Fairfax County residents, in accordance with its mission:

“To set aside public spaces for and assist citizens in the protection and enhancement of environmental values, diversity of natural habitats and cultural heritage to guarantee that these resources will be available to both present and future generations. To create and sustain quality facilities and services which offer citizens opportunities for recreation, improvement of their physical and mental well-being, and enhancement of their quality of life.”

Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services

The Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services engages, connects and collaborates with individuals, organizations, neighborhoods and communities to strategically plan, provide responsive services and build capacity to support community and neighborhood solutions. This agency is a consolidation of Community and Recreation Services and Systems Management for Human Services.

The Department of Neighborhood and Community Services schedules the use of all Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) gymnasiums and fields and Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) athletic fields. The Department also manages the Community Centers of Fairfax County.

Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority

The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA) operates in three counties and three cities, including the City of Fairfax and Fairfax County. The parks system now includes 25 parks with 11,000 acres, protecting parkland throughout the region. The 25 parks of the NVRPA system include golf courses, waterparks, historic parks, and other facilities. The City of Fairfax has been a member of the NVRPA since the 1960s, giving residents access to all parks of the NVRPA with discounted rates at some facilities. The only NVRPA Park in the City of Fairfax is Gateway Regional Park.

Fairfax Police Youth Club

Founded in 1963, the Fairfax Police Youth Clubs (FPYC) is a non-profit with 501(c)3 status that funds and organizes sports teams and programs for the children of Fairfax. The organization offers athletic programs in football, T-ball, baseball, softball, lacrosse, rugby, field hockey, running, soccer, basketball, volleyball, wrestling, cheerleading, and youth challenged activities. Approximately 40% to 50% of the participants in the various activities are City of Fairfax residents. The FPYC Office is located in Providence Park. Overall approximately 4,500 to 5,000 children participate in their activities. FPYC uses fields owned by others and provides funds to the City of Fairfax through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for use of fields at Draper Drive Park and Stafford Drive Park.

The organization was also part of a private/public partnership with the City of Fairfax and the Fairfax City School for the installation of synthetic turf for Stalnaker Field, and as a result, has priority of use on Saturdays and Sundays.

Fairfax Little League

Fairfax Little League (FLL) programs baseball for 4 to 18 year olds, including T-Ball and Challenger Leagues. Last spring their program had 1,050 to 1,500 participants of which approximately 40% were City of Fairfax residents. FLL uses the fields at Fairfax High School, Green Acres, Ratcliffe Park, Providence Elementary School, Pat Rodio Park, Westmore School Site, and Thaiss Memorial Park in the City as well as fields in Fairfax County and several surrounding communities.

Fairfax Little League (FLL) is comprised of two separate and distinct baseball leagues, the American in the North and the National in the South. The City of Fairfax is located within the American League area. The organization is a 501(c)3 non-profit that provides supervised and

competitive baseball and softball games. Additionally, Fairfax Little League offers a number of different baseball camps for children of all ages to aid their development of baseball skills through stations, competitions, and games.

Fairfax Little League is currently working on a Capital Campaign to update fields to make field improvements to maximize player use and safety and to accommodate the new 50/70 Intermediate Division. The League is working with the City of Fairfax and Fairfax County to take advantage of matching funds and also hope to add lights, move and repair fences, add scoreboards, and add irrigation.

Ordinance and Policy Review

Establishment of Public Recreation in the City of Fairfax

In May and June of 1965, the City of Fairfax held public hearings to determine the interest of persons and organizations in the establishment of a department of recreation. At the time, the City was a member of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority and were able to participate in activities of the Fairfax County Recreation Department on a fee basis. Additionally, as a result of the City-County Contract of 1965, the City was able to use school property, located in the City but belonging to the County, when not in use for school purposes. The public hearings resulted in a series of recommendations leading to the creation of the Recreation Department and the development of the first City Park and field facilities.

City of Fairfax, Virginia Park Rules and Regulations

In order to keep the park system safe and beautiful, the City Council has established the following regulations and authorized officials in the Police and Parks and Recreation Departments to enforce these regulations.

City parks are open daily from sunrise until one hour after sunset, with the exception of lighted facilities, where an 11:00 p.m. curfew applies. Lights on parks turn off at varying times. Thais Park is 9:30 pm, Draper Drive Park is 8:30 pm, and Providence Elementary school is 11:00 pm. Fairfax High School lights go off at 10:00 pm, but only on certain fields.

Section 1: Preservation of Property and Wildlife

1. No person shall abuse, deface, damage or remove any City property located in a park.
2. No person shall abuse, damage or remove any live or dead vegetation, plant, plant material, tree or shrub from a park.
3. No person shall kill, harm, frighten, net, trap, snare, hunt, or shoot any animal, bird, or reptile in the park without an official permit to do so issued by the State of Virginia and written permission by the Director of Parks and Recreation.
4. No person shall abandon or leave any animal, reptile, or bird at or in a park without written permission by the Director of Parks and Recreation.
5. No person shall construct, modify or make physical changes to the grounds or facilities in any park without written permission by the Director of Parks and Recreation.

Section 2: Conduct of Park Visitors

1. No person shall illegally gamble in a park.
2. The possession, use or discharge of any fireworks, firecrackers or explosive of any kind by is prohibited, with the exception of CO rockets.
3. No person shall use abusive, threatening or profane language in the park.

4. No person shall change any vehicle parts or repair, grease or wash vehicles on any park property, except for emergency repair.
5. No person shall fail or refuse to obey any lawful order of an authorized City employee.
6. Persons shall comply with all officially posted signs.
7. All litter and garbage must be placed in the trash receptacles. No litter or garbage shall be deposited in the park.
8. No person shall camp in any manner in a park.
9. The operating of any device for the producing of sound with louder volume than is necessary for convenient hearing is declared to be loud, disturbing and unnecessary noise in violation of Section 14-16 or the Fairfax City Code.
10. Possession or consuming alcoholic beverages and/or illegal drugs is prohibited.

Section 3: Vehicular Traffic Requirements

1. In addition to City of Fairfax and State vehicle laws, the following regulations shall apply on park property:
2. Vehicular traffic is only permitted on designated paved or graveled roadways.
3. Parking is only permitted in designated areas.
4. All posted traffic signs will be observed.
5. Bicycles, wagons, and other such vehicles shall not be placed or operated in areas where children play.

Section 4: Business and Solicitation

No person shall sell, rent, or trade goods or services for profit or otherwise in a park without written permission by the Parks and Recreation Director.

Section 5: Picnic and Shelter Facilities

1. Groups or individuals may reserve shelter facilities through the City of Fairfax Parks and Recreation Department. (Rules described below)
2. All fires within a park must be confined to safe cooking receptacles (grills). No open pit or surface fires are allowed.
3. No person shall leave a fire unattended. No person shall leave a fire without having fully extinguished it.

Section 6: Rules and Regulation of Athletic Facilities

Playing Fields

1. Users of all athletic fields must abide by "Policies, Rules and Regulations governing use of City of Fairfax Park and School Athletic Fields and Facilities," (Summarized below)
2. Groups or individuals may reserve athletic facilities through the City of Fairfax Parks and Recreation Department. Groups or individuals receiving authorization will be issued an official permit, which they must be able to produce upon request when using the facility.
3. Unless an official permit is produced by a group or individual, athletic facilities are available on a first-come-first-serve basis.

Tennis Courts

1. All tennis courts are available on a first-come-first-serve basis.
4. When others are waiting for a court, players shall confine their use of the court to one hour for singles play and one and one-half hours for doubles play.
5. Only soft soled athletic type shoes shall be worn on the courts.
6. Climbing on fences or nets is not allowed.
7. Bicycles, roller skates, skateboards, and motorized vehicles are not allowed on the courts.
8. Tennis courts shall be used only for tennis, except where specifically marked for other activities (i.e., basketball).

Van Dyck Park

No recurring or league type athletic activities will be scheduled by the Director of Parks and Recreation at Van Dyck Park, except for selected City sponsored events.

Section 7: Fairfax City/Fairfax County Reciprocal Agreement

On October 12, 1979 the City of Fairfax entered into a reciprocal agreement with Fairfax County that included parks and recreation. Briefly, this means that residents of both jurisdictions will now pay the same fees and have equal access and priority to all facilities and programs of either jurisdiction. For example, City residents can use Burke Lake Park and all other County parks for free, and can use Wakefield Park Recreation Center and similar County facilities at the same price as County residents.

Section 8: General Rules

1. The following miscellaneous offenses apply to the City of Fairfax parks whether or not it is so specified in such offenses. Whenever a penalty is specified in a miscellaneous offense listed below, such penalty shall supersede the penalty provision of Section 15-16 of the Fairfax City Code.
2. Fairfax City Code Sections 4-8, 14-1, 14-2.1, 14-8, 14-14, 14-16, 14-20.1, 14-22, 25-1, 25-2, 25-3

Cooperative Agreement for Use of School Facilities

The City of Fairfax School Board and the City of Fairfax, through its Department of Parks and Recreation (the Department) encourages the maximum use of City school buildings and grounds consistent with the educational requirements of each facility. Jointly, the School Board and the City fosters youth and civic activities that contribute to the well-being of the City and its citizens. To the greatest extent possible, the School Board and the City agree that School Facilities should be made available to the City outside of school hours and school use for community, educational, recreational, civic and cultural arts. It is understood that the School Board and the City share common interests, capabilities and resources.

The School Board and the City support the school/community concept and by this agreement, the parties will continue such cooperation. By this Agreement, all parties understand that School Facilities will be available for school purposes including all after school activities as a first priority. This Agreement will correspond to Fairfax County Public School Board Policy and Regulation 8420. (Website: www.fcps.edu/fts/comuse)

Scheduling of Facilities

The use of School Facilities by the School Board for school and school related activities shall be the first priority. School Facilities may be used for other activities according to the following priorities: First, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) instructional and extracurricular programs; Second, school related groups such as parent-and-teacher associations and booster clubs, tutoring, and school business partners operating under special provisions; Third, Fairfax City Government, Fairfax City Recreation Department and Fairfax County Department of Recreation and Community Services; Fourth, community, youth, civic and other groups when space is available and at times that do not interfere with the previously stated priorities. This priority list corresponds with Fairfax County Public School Policy 8420.

1. Elementary Schools Daniels Run and Providence

During the months of November through March scheduling of the gymnasiums at the elementary schools after normal school hours (including the School Aged Child Care program) will be the responsibility of the Department. The scheduling will be coordinated by the Department through a designated representative of each school. Use of all other School Facilities at the elementary schools will be determined and scheduled by the individual school. The scheduling of outside athletic facilities at the elementary after school usage will be the responsibility of the Department.

2. Lanier Middle School

The scheduling of Lanier Middle School is the same as the scheduling of the elementary facilities and fields. The school will be responsible for scheduling the auditorium.

3. Fairfax High School

The scheduling of interior and exterior school facilities at Fairfax High School will be coordinated through the Community Activities Office. All activities scheduled at Fairfax High School extracurricular and community will be in accordance with the parking requirements and limitations of the City of Fairfax Special Permit, May 2004.

4. School Facilities to Be Scheduled

School facilities will be scheduled by the Department based on the following guidelines:

5. Elementary Schools Daniels Run and Providence

- November-March gymnasium
- June-August gymnasium, cafeteria, classroom(s) as designated by the school

The use of these school facilities during other months will be scheduled by the individual school. Athletic fields are scheduled by the Department throughout the entire year.

6. Lanier Middle School

- September-August gymnasium(s)

The use of these school facilities during other months will be scheduled by the individual school. Athletic fields are scheduled by the Department throughout the entire year.

7. Fairfax High School

The school will schedule use of school facilities and the athletic fields through the Community Activities Office.

8. Westmore Site

Athletic fields are scheduled by the Department throughout the entire year.

Program Supervision

The Department will provide a responsible supervisor to monitor the use of School Facilities. For unlighted outside athletic fields scheduled by the Department, the Department will not supervise the fields but will periodically check during the time of use. For lighted athletic fields (when the lights are used), the Department will provide a supervisor on site.

For interior use of School Facilities, the Department agrees to follow the procedures outlined in the Fairfax County Policy and Regulation 8420 and in the Community Use of Public Facilities Manual.

Maintenance and Enhancement to School Facilities

1. Responsibility for the maintenance, enhancement and improvements to the following School Facilities shall be the responsibility of the City:
2. Mowing of grass on athletic fields at the elementary schools and Lanier Middle School.
3. Baseball backstops, softball backstops, dugouts for ball fields, fencing around ball fields, bridge at Daniels Run, soccer goals and any other piece of equipment related to athletic fields.
4. Playground equipment and any other structure that is placed on School Board property that is recreational in nature, such as ball field lights and storage facilities.

Improvements to School Facilities

Improvements to any school facility suggested by the Department will be submitted in writing to the School Board by October 1 for consideration in the City's five year Capital Improvement Program. The School Board will then accept or reject the requested improvement and notify the Department and the City of its decision.

Joint Planning and Future Development

The School Board and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) will meet annually no later than June 30th to discuss joint planning of programs or future development of School Facilities that may be mutually beneficial to the school population and the community.

Storage on School Board Property

The principal at the individual school will determine whether the Department will be permitted to store any City equipment at the school. Should the Department wish to build a facility to store equipment on School Board property, the Department shall follow the guidelines as outlined in sections V and VI of the agreement.

Amendment of Agreement and Communication

This agreement will be reviewed bi-annually prior to the joint meeting by a subcommittee consisting of two members each from the School Board and the PRAB. The chairmanship of the joint subcommittee will alternate. The School Board and the City must approve any amendments or changes to this agreement.

Amendments

Any questions regarding the Agreement will be brought forward to the Superintendent of Schools and the Director of Parks and Recreation.

Duration and Cancellation

This Agreement shall remain in effect unless it is canceled either by the School Board or by the City upon thirty (30) days prior written notice to the Superintendent of Schools on behalf of the School Board or the City Manager on behalf of the City.

Rules and Regulations Governing Athletic Facilities

Park and school facilities are scheduled by the Parks and Recreation Department. Users are expected to assist in maintenance of these facilities which includes field lines and safety conditions. Users are expected to make a yearly commitment in writing to provide this maintenance.

Criteria for field use:

1. Submit written application (February 1 for spring and summer; July 15 for fall; October for winter) - Six months before deadline for “new league.”
2. Applicants must be City of Fairfax residents and 2/3 of participants must be City of Fairfax or Fairfax County residents - Leaders must not have previous violations of Parks and Recreation or School Board regulations.
3. Outdoor facilities are open from sunrise to sunset (or 11:00 p.m. if lighted) - School facilities are open after school hours until sunset Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. until sunset on Saturdays, and 1:00-7:00 p.m. on Sundays.
4. Participation will not be restricted based on race, religion, origin, or creed.
5. The Parks and Recreation Department reserves the right to deny use to any use who does not comply with all regulations.
6. Reoccurring uses will not be scheduled at Van Dyck Park.
7. School uses preempt other uses.
8. For-Profit must have a sanctioned sponsor to use fields.
9. Field schedule is available upon request.

Approval for field use is granted by the Director of Parks and Recreation, or designee, who reserves the right to deny the use of facilities at any time. Facility use is limited to times and areas in the approved permit. No illegal activities, alcoholic beverages, or smoking is allowed, and failure to follow these policies will lead to forfeiture of future field or facility use.

Priority for facility use is given at school facilities to school uses over Parks and Recreation sanctioned programs, and City of Fairfax facilities give priority to sanctioned programs over governmental programs and other groups. Users agree not to hold any City agency or employee liable for loss, injury, or damage related to field or facility use, and league representatives must sign a hold harmless agreement annually. The City is considering a requirement for insurance for groups of 25 or more. Field and facility closures at school follow school closings with regard to inclement weather.

Groups are generally given first priority to facilities that they used the prior year, and community groups are assigned to facilities within their community when possible. Leagues are allocated playing time in units of play (2 hours). These units are drawn from a receptacle to determine time and location of facility use.

For a league to be sanctioned by the Parks and Recreation Department, it must consist of at least five teams and must be of a non-profit nature. Additionally, the league must provide a statement of playing time guaranteed to all participants.

Harold Stalaker Field at Fairfax High School

Addendum A outlines the special use agreement for Stalaker Field. In November, 2004, the City Council approved the installation of synthetic turf for Stalaker Field made possible through a private/public partnership between the City of Fairfax, the Fairfax City School Board, and the Fairfax Police Youth Club.

Fairfax High School is given first priority of the field for school activities and has exclusive use from Monday through Friday throughout the year. The Parks and Recreation Department schedules use for Saturdays and Sundays, giving the Fairfax Police Youth Club priority of use. The Department can apply for use on Monday through Friday when the field is not in use by the school.

The Parks and Recreation Department is given use of the scoreboard, sound system, and lighting but not the snack bar. The Department is granted use from 8 a.m. until dark on Saturdays and Sundays, and later with lighting on a case by case basis.

Other Rental Facilities Policies

Old Town Hall

Available for weddings, parties, or meetings, Old Town Hall can be rented from 7 a.m. until 2 a.m., Monday through Sunday. The venue is operated by the Parks and Recreation Department which rents the facility to City residents at a reduced rate. For receptions and social events, users pay for five hours of use with additional time paid for hourly. Prices vary by day of the week.

Business meetings and commercial usage is paid for hourly with a two hour minimum. Additional charges are required for peak use (weekends, holidays). City organizations and civic associations are allowed five free non-peak and one free peak use per calendar year. Finally, Old Town Hall has two rentable rooms and can comfortably accommodate 250 guests. Alcohol is allowed, but a permit is required in some instances.

Green Acres Center

The Green Acres Center is owned by the City of Fairfax School Board and leased to the City of Fairfax. The Green Acres Center has six rooms for community use with priority given first to Parks and Recreation Activities and Events, followed by City sponsored events. Local non-profits are given the next highest priority with other non-profit community groups coming next, and all other groups come last. A local group is defined as having 50% or more City residents, and a non-profit must have 501c3 status.

City of Fairfax and City sponsored groups as well as non-profit groups can use meeting rooms at no charge on weekdays. For-profit groups must pay an hourly rate to use meeting rooms on weekdays, and all groups must pay to use the facility on weekends. Additionally, gym, kitchen, and cafeteria use always has a charge. Green Acres hours are 7 a.m. until 10 p.m., seven days a week with later use allowed with Parks and Recreation Department approval. Finally, alcoholic beverages are not permitted.

Picnic Pavilions

The City of Fairfax has six rentable picnic pavilions (two large and four small facilities). The large pavilions can be rented for \$60 for four hours, while the small pavilions require a fee of \$40 for

the same time period. Additional time is charged at \$15 per hour for large and \$10 per hour for small pavilions. Rates are planned to be raised by \$10 for both small and large pavilions.

Park rules must be followed when using picnic pavilions which includes no alcoholic beverages. The City is considering the allowance of alcohol at a park pavilion. Groups renting pavilions must have their permit in their possession when using the facility, as shelters are available on a first-come-first-served basis in the absence of a permit.

Showmobile

The City of Fairfax has a 32-foot portable stage called the Showmobile that can be rented when not in use by the City. The unit is rented at a flat fee for the first 8 hours with an hourly fee for additional time. Usage fees are lowest for City and non-profit uses followed by other groups located in the City of Fairfax. Other groups pay a higher rate.

Tree Management Policy

The policy of the City of Fairfax is to conserve trees on all City owned properties and rights-of-way. The City's arborist makes decisions on the removal of any tree, whether alive or dead. The City has established tree preservation area (TPAs) where trees may only be cut down if determined to be dead or diseased by the arborist and pose a public hazard.

Two parks, Daniels Run and Belle's Bird Sanctuary, are entirely within TPAs, while parts of four others, Van Dyck, Kutner, Ranger Road, and Providence are with TPAs. Trees in the TPA are left to decompose where they fall or are moved from play areas or trails to do so. Additionally, any tree that will sustain sever damage as a result of construction may be removed (within TPA or not).

Trees on other City property may be cut down for any of the following reasons:

1. The tree is in the path of an approved construction project and must be cleared.
2. The City's arborist determines the tree to be a hazard to persons or property.
3. The City's arborist determines the tree to be diseased or dead.

The City will encourage policies that protect trees including:

1. Maintaining a tree planting program with continued participation in the Tree City U.S.A. project.
2. Replacing dead trees and planting new trees where appropriate as funding is available.
3. Reviewing the City's tree planting program annually by a certified arborist.
4. Review by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for plantings in park areas.

The City is in the process of determining the types and caliper of trees allowed for planting.

Policy on the Use of Herbicides on City of Fairfax Property

The City follows state regulations on the application of chemicals with the added requirement that signs be placed for 24 hours before and after areas are sprayed. The City sprays to control poison ivy within three feet of a path boundary. Park and lawn management chemicals are used in manner consistent with federal and state laws, and efforts are made to minimize the impacts on non-target species.

Special Event Fund-Raising Activity

Before holding a City operated or City sponsored fundraising event, the activity must:

1. Be recreational and of benefit to the citizens of the City of Fairfax.
2. Be cost-recoverable for all direct costs.
3. Not impact staffs' ability to complete other previously approved work.
4. Have City Manager approval.

A non-profit must meet these requirements and carry acceptable liability insurance. Additionally, the City Manager is to keep City Council informed of all special events.

Policy on Naming Facilities and Placement of Memorial Plaques

Facilities in the City of Fairfax are named based on the geographical, historic, or ecological characteristics of the site. Facilities on school sites are named after the school. A facility may be named after an individual or organization as a result of a significant contribution to the city. Also, a plaque of personal recognition can be donated with the approval of City Council.

Additional policies and guidelines for naming rights and other forms of donations are outlined in the 13 page Leaving a Legacy – Legacy for Fairfax Policy Guideline document.

Special Use Permits for Parks

On November 13, 2001, the Fairfax City Council approved the request by the City of Fairfax Parks and Recreation Department for a special use permit. The permit allowed for the expansion of the facilities in Providence Park to allow for one soccer field with the option for an additional field at a later date if needed. The permit also allowed for the use of Van Dyck Park for one soccer field, with time restraints, until January 1, 2004 when it would be reevaluated. Additionally, staff were directed to finalize plans to retain at least two soccer fields and one ball field at the Green Acres site, to be submitted to City Council by February 1, 2002.

On November 9, 2004, the Fairfax City Council approved a City Manager request for a special use permit to allow government uses and a nursery school in the R-3 District and a special exception extension to reduce the required amount of off-street parking at Green Acres. The permit expired on December 31, 2009.

On November 13, 2007, the Fairfax City Council approved a City Manager request for a special use permit to allow a government use in the I-2 Industrial District to allow for the construction of two artificial turf fields in Draper Drive Park. The permit also allowed a special exception for 70-foot lights for the fields. A deciduous tree screen, an evergreen screen, and an 8-foot tall chain link fence were also required between the park and neighboring residential uses. Much of the funding for these fields was reallocated from Green Acres field improvements.

Procedure for Passing an Ordinance in the City of Fairfax

Any changes to the regulations and ordinances summarized above requires the passage of an ordinance by the City Council. Before passage, an ordinance must be introduced by a member of City Council at a regular or special meeting, and, upon introduction, is read for the public. The ordinance is given a public hearing at least three days after introduction, usually at the next Council meeting. The full text of the ordinance is published in the newspaper telling of the date, time, and location of the hearing.

Amendments to the ordinance can be made at any time, but only require publication if they introduce new subject matter or “radically change the overall purpose” of the ordinance. Any amendments will be read at the second reading at the public hearing. After the hearing, the proposed ordinance may be passed.

Parks and Recreation Department Budget Overview

The City of Fairfax has a FY 2015 budget of approximately \$4,328,512 with responsibility for an additional portion in the City Marketing Budget. Revenue generated by various components of the Department is estimated at approximately \$1,636,459. The difference is supported by the City of Fairfax.

Department Operations

Park and Ball Field Maintenance

The line item budget for the maintenance of the parks, pavilions, ball fields, playgrounds, etc. is \$1,267,444. This budget includes full time and part time salaries as well as equipment, supplies, chemicals, and contract services.

Special Events

The approved budget for the special events held in the City of Fairfax is approximately \$471,682. Events such as the annual Fall Festival, Annual Holiday Craft Show, Festival of Lights, and the Independence Day Celebration are anticipated to generate revenue of approximately \$182,986.

Revenue Generating Programs

Special events are budgeted to generate an average of \$182,986 in revenue to support the Department's budget. Additional revenue comes from facilities and program operations.

Programs generating revenue are the Green Acres Center, Stacy C. Sherwood Center, day camps, and cultural arts. The programs that generate the most revenue are the day camps and after-school programs. The revenue anticipated to be generated in FY2015 from these and other programs is \$862,545.

Facilities such as Blenheim, Old Town Hall, Stacy C. Sherwood Center, and the Green Acres Community Center generate an additional \$590,928 in rentals and pavilion rentals, showmobile rentals, and fees for field usage generate additional revenue.

Total revenue budgeted by the Fairfax Park and Recreation Department for FY2015 is approximately \$1,636,459. This figure is approximately 38% of the Department's total budget.

Recreation Administration

The annual budget for the Department's administration, which includes administrative personnel, facility personnel, special event personnel, plus expenses, is approximately \$2,240,003. This line item does not include park and ball field maintenance personnel which are included in the maintenance budget. Some part time personnel for Old Town Hall are also separate.

Benchmarking Comparison

The benchmarking comparison to a national group of NRPA member communities that represented communities in Virginia, Maryland and Gold Medal Finalist Communities that participated in the PRORAGIS Program identified their median operation expenditure per capita of \$232.80. The Northern Virginia Parks and Recreation Directors Survey indicated a median of \$160.00 as compared to the City of Fairfax at \$169.40 per person. When compared to the Northern Virginia communities and the better departments of similar size throughout the country, the overall budget expenditure per resident for the City of Fairfax is much lower than the Gold Medal communities by \$63 and higher than the Northern Virginia communities by \$9.40, indicating the City of Fairfax is in line with the Northern Virginia counterparts, but spends much less than a group of similar Gold Medal finalists throughout the USA.

A comparison of the capital expenditures per capita indicates the City of Fairfax at only \$5.10 as compared to the Gold Medal communities at a much higher \$31.53.

Opportunities

A goal should be to have all special events as revenue neutral as possible. This goal may be difficult with the high cost of overhead for the special events, such as the Independence Day Parade/Fireworks Show and the Chocolate Lovers Festival. Additional revenue could potentially be generated through sponsorships, vending, ticket sales, etc.

Facility rentals and program revenues are excellent considering the limitations of the facilities. The public input process indicates that adult wellness and fitness, senior programs, adult sports programs, and teen programs are a priority. The adult wellness and adult sports could generate income. The Consultant notes that additional revenue could be generated through these and many more programs, as well as membership fees, with the development of an indoor multipurpose recreation center.

Another recommendation is to implement an accounting system for special events that will allow a clearer accounting of the income and expenses specifically for each event, allowing the Parks and Recreation Department to track the costs more like a business.

Previous Studies Summaries

Comprehensive Plan of the City of Fairfax

Prepared by Planning Commission and the Department of Community Development and Planning

Adopted by City Council on April 10, 2012

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Chapter

Introduction:

This chapter of the City's Comprehensive Plan tells of the gradual loss of open space to development over the City's history leading to an increased desire to preserve what remains. A bond referendum in 2000 has allowed the City to purchase eight parcels consisting of 44 acres to expand the open space inventory. The City of Fairfax accepted the National Gold Medal Award from the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA) and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

Existing Facilities:

The City, as of this Plan, has twenty-four parks on 200 acres of land. The Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center was constructed in 2011 to provide spaces for classes, performances, meetings, and the arts. The City also has an extensive system of trails for walking, jogging, and bicycling. The City's parks are placed into four categories based on the 2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan.

Neighborhood parks are small parks located within walking distance with playgrounds, fields, and courts.

Vest Pocket Parks, a subcategory of neighborhood parks, use odd-sized pieces of land for play areas and open space (also called mini-parks).

Community Parks provide facilities that require more space than what is provided at a neighborhood park such as lighted play fields, swimming pools, picnic areas, and walking trails.

District Parks (none in the City of Fairfax) contain over 50 acres and provide for fishing, biking, and open space activities in addition to the services provided at a community park.

Regional Parks contain over 100 acres and provide a wide variety of recreational services. The City has one regional park, Gateway Regional Park, which serve as the nodal point for the trails system.

The plan refers to facility standards, also from the Virginia Outdoors Plan, for twenty types of facilities and calls for the development of a master plan to review these standards as well as project development and funding and native species planting requirements.

The Plan describes a need to acquire and preserve open space to assure that these lands are kept undeveloped and to reduce impervious land cover to reduce stormwater runoff volumes and pollution.

To address the need for distinctions between different types of open space, the City's Land Use Plan calls for three open space land use designations: Open Space—Recreation, Open Space—Conservation, and Open Space—Preservation.

Objectives:

PRO-1: Acquire lands, development rights, or conservation easements as necessary to ensure adequate locations to support recreational activities.

1. Identify lands to enhance the parks and trails system based on the Open Space Citizens' Advisory Committee Report.
2. Assure that the funding and acquisition process yields a balance of the intended open space uses while utilizing outside funding to maximize funds.
3. Focus on obtaining conservation easements to reduce acquisition and maintenance costs.

PRO-2: Obtain or otherwise gain designation of small parcels for use as vest pocket parks as public gathering spaces, open space buffers or neighborhood passive recreation areas.

1. Convert City owned properties and rights-of way to open space.
2. Encourage the creation of vest pocket parks during redevelopment plans.

PRO-3: Provide and maintain excellent facilities and services to accommodate present and future needs.

1. Upgrade and expand existing facilities to provide a wide variety of facilities and programs.
2. Expand the Green Acres Center into a diverse recreation center.
3. Plan for the future Katherine Barker Park.
4. Improve accessibility and restroom facilities.

PRO-4: Provide amenities and activities to attract workers, visitors and residents.

1. Incorporate trails, parks, or open spaces into residential and commercial developments.
2. Improve the trail system through awareness, expansion, and connectivity.

**Great Parks, Great Communities Plan
2010-2020 Comprehensive Park System Plan
Prepared by Fairfax County Park Authority
Adopted by the Park Authority Board in June 2011**

Foreword:

The long range plan is intended to reflect the wide range of community users and supporters of the parks system to meet public expectations for land, facilities, natural, cultural and financial

resources. The plan places an emphasis on sustainability and serves as a guide for decision making.

The financial structure has changed significantly since the 1990s with an increased focus on revenue generation services to bridge the gap in funding created by decreasing tax revenue allocated to parks. As a result of the increased reliance on revenue operations, these services, including RECenters and golf courses, must grow.

The Business Plan aims to create a road map to financial sustainability through a review and analysis of core services and programs to reach a full determination of operation, management, and capital costs. The Business Plan provides a strategy for revenue generating facilities with cost-recovery targets for core programs and services.

This plan considers the ongoing needs as the 10 year Capital Plan included in the 2004 Needs Assessment comes to an end. Although, progress has been made to meet the goals outlined in the Needs Assessment, more than half of those needs have not yet been addressed despite public demand for these services.

Countywide Chapter

Introduction:

The Fairfax County parks system contains over 22,500 acres in 416 parks and has a usage by about 80% of the county population. The parks system has received the Gold Medal for Parks and Recreation but must still maintain constant efforts to meet the changing needs of county residents.

The Great Parks, Great Communities planning project commenced in 2004 and contains four objectives:

1. Collect and analyze relevant park and recreation resource data.
2. Determine public preferences, identify issues, develop strategies, and identify changes to sustain park system resources and meet future needs.
3. Combine established Park Authority objectives, policies, standards, and priorities for the protection and stewardship of natural and cultural resources and the development and management of recreation resources
4. Create a comprehensive long range park system plan, providing recommendations and priorities for balancing the park system to serve as an overarching plan to guide park planning efforts at the individual park master plan level and to meet existing and future park needs.

History:

Created in 1950, the Park Authority has continued to grow and evolve to the needs of the County since its first land acquisition, and the approval of the first bond referendum in 1959 to fund the acquisition of 75 neighborhood and community parks and approximately 20 acres of stream valley lands. Substantial land acquisitions continued throughout the history of the Authority with an increasing focus on recreation services, including RECenters, gardens, golf courses, equestrian centers, and athletic fields. As of 2010, the County controls seven golf facilities, over 750 athletic fields, seven off-leash dog parks, twelve farmers markets, and the Water Mine Family Swimmin' Hole.

Funding:

Funding for parks is provided through three means: taxes, revenue, and voter-approved bonds. Reductions in tax allocations have led to additional pressure on fee based services and a need for alternative funding methods, including partnerships and user fees.

More sustainable parks system

Guiding Principles, Policies and Countywide Plans:

1. Strategic Plan- a scorecard to measure the Park Authority's performance.
2. Business Plan- a "road map" to serve needs and citizens of Fairfax County.
3. Park Authority Manual- Park Authority Board policies.
4. Needs Assessment- identifies recreation needs, establishes service level standards, and proposes a \$377 million 10-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to meet these need.
5. Parks and Recreation Policy Plan- incorporates new service level standards, land acquisition criteria, and revised Park Classifications.
6. Natural Resource Management Plan- addresses natural resource issues and strategies.
7. Cultural Resource Management Plan- addresses cultural resource issues and strategies.
8. Urban Parks Framework- establishes an urban parks typology, service level standards, and framework for the development of urban parks.
9. Trail Strategy Plan- collects and analyzes the data concerning trail projects and devises the best process for evaluating and prioritizing trail projects.
10. Facility Lifecycle Replacement Schedules- uses facility installation dates and life expectancy standards to determine replacement schedules to ensure service or capacity at the designed level.
11. Comprehensive Financial Management Plan- provides revenue and expenditure projections and principles for the management of the Park Authority's Revenue Fund.

Trends:

Land use- While preserving the County's remaining farm land, high environmental and scenic value areas, and open spaces is difficult because of land values and the pressure of development, development and population growth will create additional need for protected open space and recreational facilities.

Park Participation- The percentage of households using County parks has remained steady since 2000. However, differences exist between demographic groups as households with children under 18 use parks more than those without, and White residents use parks more than other ethnic groups. Trends also vary between facility types with lakefront parks, RECenters, and specialty sites seeing increases in attendance while attendance at other types of facilities remain steady.

Service Levels- The Needs Assessment Final Report (2004) found that the greatest unmet needs were for paved walking/biking trails, indoor exercise/fitness, facilities, unpaved hiking/walking/biking trails, and small local parks. The process also established service level standards for 23 park facility types. Based on these standards, the County found a deficit in 11 facility types for 2010 and projected a deficit in 12 types in 2020.

Stewardship- A key component of the Park Authority’s mission, stewardship is the careful, responsible and sustainable management of the natural and cultural resources entrusted to the Park Authority by Fairfax County for present and future generations.

Planning Process:

The Plan consisted of four phases:

1. Phase I (2007) – Existing Conditions
2. Phase II (2008) – Input & Analysis
3. Phase III (2009) – Plan Development
4. Phase IV (2010) – Review & Approval

This process with the input of the public through ten workshops combined with email and web feedback from individuals representing a large variety of interest groups yielded themes to serve as the conceptual framework for the Great Parks Plan.

The 8 planning themes are to:

1. Connectivity- Increase access with better integrating parks with surrounding land uses (neighborhoods and employment centers) and increasing park-to-park connections within the system.
2. Community Building- Encourage community interaction through facilities such as picnic areas, amphitheaters, dog parks, garden plots, and farmers markets as well as colocation of park facilities with other community uses to strengthen community connections.
3. Service Delivery- Provide more equitable distribution of services across all parts of the County.
4. Facility Reinvestment- Address long term sustainability of park facilities through initial design and development combined with facility renewal and replacement efforts.
5. Land Acquisition- Protect and buffer natural areas and historic sites and provide new recreational facilities.
6. Resource Interpretation- Increase awareness of natural and cultural resources the Park Authority holds in public trust through interpretive signage at visitors’ centers and classrooms.
7. Cultural Resource Stewardship- Focus on managing threats and actively managing existing natural and cultural resources.
8. Natural Resource Stewardship- Mitigate threats to the health, protection and viability of natural resources on county parkland, including habitat fragmentation and water resource degradation.

Implementation:

The three implementation steps are to:

1. Amend the County Comprehensive Plan Area Plan recommendations relating to parks and recreation and consider revised park classifications and recommendations for individual parks.
2. Create a five-year implementation plan of activities with assigned priorities.

3. Update the Needs Assessment survey with an evaluation of the 23 Countywide service level standards and identify capital funding priorities.

Fairfax Planning District Chapter

Park System Summary:

The Fairfax Planning District contains 51 public parks with a total of approximately 1,320 acres, making up about 7 percent of the district. The parks in the district include local parks, a district park, and resource-based parks, while facilities include a RECenter, rectangle and diamond ball fields, a golf course, mini golf, tennis and multi-use courts, playgrounds, dog park, garden plots, trails and picnic facilities.

Larger parks, including Oak Marr District Park, the Random Hills-Carney Park complex, and Fairfax Villa Park are isolated and contain high-quality resources. Limited opportunities for additional parkland exist in the District. Commercial and residential development is expected to continue at a moderate pace, but the most significant land use change is expected in redevelopment.

Park Classification:

1. Local Parks are designed to serve up to a 3 mile radius depending on the facilities and range from 2 to 50 acres in size
2. District Parks serve greater geographic areas (3 to 6 miles) and provide a wide variety of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and are generally more than 50 acres in size, accommodating longer visits and a larger number of users.
3. Resource-Based Parks support nature, horticulture and history programs, gardening, nature watching and appreciation of local, regional, state and national history with trails and interpretative features and facilities serving as the primary uses.

Outlined previously, the master planning process determined eight planning themes resulting from ten public workshops and public feedback on the park system throughout the year via email and the project web site.

Planning themes:

Connectivity- Improve non-motorized park access and link park sites through interpretive connections.

Recommendations:

1. Use Park Authority's Trail Strategy Plan to evaluate potential new trails, connections and improvements.
2. Work with Somerset HOA to create a trail connection to Long Branch Stream Valley, allowing students to walk to Woodson High School and Old Forge Elementary School.
3. Continue Difficult Run trail from Stuart Mill to Lawyers Road.
4. Construct a trail in Carney Park to connect two developer-built trails.
5. Link Gabrielson Gardens to a gardening interpretive theme.
6. Include the Difficult Run and Accotink Stream Valleys as significant nodes along a natural areas interpretive trail.

Community Building- Encourage community interaction through facilities such as picnic areas, amphitheaters, dog parks, garden plots, and farmers markets as well as collocation of park facilities with other community uses to strengthen community connections.

Recommendations:

1. Add reservable picnic shelters.
2. Create more garden plot sites in parks.
3. Adding playgrounds at local parks.
4. Add recreational facilities and amenities to parks collocated with other civic uses.
5. Promote the collocation of parks with schools and other civic uses.

Service Delivery- Provide more equitable distribution of services across all parts of the County and meet established facility service level standards.

Recommendations:

1. Upgrade athletic fields at Oak Marr to increase usage capacity.
2. Partner with the City of Fairfax and George Mason University in the provision of recreation facilities that serve both city and county residents.
3. Create a Master Plan for Waples Mill Meadow Park and Wayland Street Park.

Facility Reinvestment- Address long term sustainability of park facilities through initial design and development combined with facility renewal and replacement efforts.

Recommendations:

1. Make repairs and upgrades to the Oak Marr RECenter.
2. Replace older facilities at Eakin and Surrey Square Parks.
3. Update existing fields to maximize playability, including adding synthetic turf and lights to the fields at Oak Marr Park.
4. Provide bicycle racks and playgrounds in local parks where planned.
5. Expand the parking lot at Blake Lane Park.
6. Determine if temporary facilities are taking up space that is needed for parking.
7. Place new parking lots over utility easements if allowed.

Land Acquisition- The district is fairly well served by local parks, with the exception of the Fair Oaks / Fairfax Center Area and the Smokewood neighborhood, but limited opportunities exist for new parks.

Recommendations:

1. Seek to acquire land for new local parks for recreation facilities in the Fair Oaks/Fairfax Center Area.
2. Seek to acquire land for a new local park for recreation facilities in the Smokewood neighborhood.
3. Acquire parcels and historic resources adjacent to Waples Mill Meadow Park.
4. Acquire additional historic sites in the Fairfax District including Squirrel Hill.

5. Encourage new development to create buffers between historic sites and development.
6. Acquire additional properties that contain significant cultural resources.
7. Seek to acquire and/or protect through other means remaining natural areas especially large tracts and those connecting to other natural areas or significant natural resources.
8. Seek opportunities to add land near Waples Mill Meadow Park.
9. Seek opportunities to acquire additional properties adjacent to Fairfax Villa Park.
10. Seek opportunities to expand Long Branch Stream Valley Park.
11. Encourage owners of large private parcels to protect natural and cultural resources through easements.
12. Encourage the management of utility corridors and other easements with natural resource goals not just utility goals.
13. Seek opportunities to acquire several large, relatively undisturbed private parcels that provide important linkages.

Resource Interpretation- Increase awareness of natural and cultural resources the Park Authority holds in public trust through interpretive signage at visitors' centers and classrooms.

Recommendations:

1. Provide interpretive signs at Eakin, Fairfax Villa, Waples Mill, Gabrielson Gardens, and along the Accotink Stream Valley
2. Provide interpretation of vernal pools in the Accotink Stream Valley for park visitors.
3. Conduct an archaeological study of Gabrielson Gardens and use the information to guide preservation and interpretation of the site.

Cultural Resource Stewardship- Stabilize historic structures to ensure their preservation and identify cultural resources.

Recommendations:

1. Preserve and protect the historic features of this district, particularly the Manassas Gap Railroad and mill sites.
2. Preserve and protect the cultural features of this district, particularly the Native American sites.
3. Assess properties for cultural resources and take mitigation measures before development.
4. Document and record buildings and structures using methods of Historic American Buildings.

Natural Resource Stewardship- Mitigate threats to the health, protection and viability of natural resources on county parkland, including habitat fragmentation and water resource degradation.

Recommendations:

1. Acquire and protect remaining natural areas in the district especially large tracts and those connecting to other natural areas.
2. Protect and improve existing corridors, linkages and watersheds.
3. Provide new linkages between remaining public and private natural areas.

4. Manage utility corridors and other easements consistent with natural resource goals, not just utility service goals.
5. Designate permanent resource protection zones on parkland that define appropriate uses and development.
6. Work with the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) and private land owners to capture and treat stormwater.
7. Encourage private property owners to adopt wildlife and water friendly landscaping practices to improve water quality and habitat.
8. Restore riparian buffers on parkland.
9. Direct development of park infrastructure to areas that reflect few or poor quality natural resources.
10. Ensure that natural resources are assessed prior to any park development and reduce impacts.
11. Conduct natural resource inventories and develop and implement natural resource management plans for natural areas.
12. Inventory vernal pools and amphibian species in Accotink Stream Valley.
13. Educate citizens on the problems associated with invasive plant species and work to eliminate invasives near parks.
14. Expand non-native invasive plant management and habitat restoration on parkland.
15. Ensure sustainability of tree canopy on parkland.
16. Encourage tree planting and natural landscaping techniques on private land.
17. Incorporate natural landscaping techniques on parkland, avoid tree loss from development, and increase tree canopy.
18. Designate permanent resource protection zones in park master plans, defining appropriate uses related to natural resources.

**City of Fairfax Commission of the Arts Strategic Plan
Prepared by City of Fairfax Commission of the Arts
Approved by the Commission of the Arts in January 2013**

The Strategic Plan directs the mission of the Commission of the Arts in the City of Fairfax. Established in 1979, the Commission promotes artistic expression and acts as a steward of both City and other funding for the arts. The Plan imagines the City of Fairfax as an arts destination and sets goals to increase of the Commission's role, encourage diversity, promote young artists, and increase collaboration with City businesses.

Objectives:

1. Purchase, install, and maintain a public art sculpture at Kamp Washington
2. Purchase, install, and maintain a public art piece at the Stacy C. Sherwood Center
3. Expand performing arts events at Old Town Plaza and the Veteran's Amphitheater
4. Support the creation of a 300-600 seat performance art venue

Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority Five Year Strategic Plan 2012-2017
Prepared by Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority
Adopted by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority on September 20, 2012

Introduction:

The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA) operates in three counties and three cities, including the City of Fairfax and Fairfax County. The parks systems now includes 25 parks with 11,000 acres. The Plan builds on the success of the previous five year plan.

Goals:

The Plan consists of goals separated into four categories:

Places

- Goal 1: Enhance natural resource conservation in riparian areas - Protect waterways, water quality, and habitat.
- Goal 2: Increase cultural and historic resource interpretation and preservation -Identify and acquire historic resources.
- Goal 3: Actively assess opportunities for new facilities and acquire additional properties - Increase membership and expand open space and recreation services.
- Goal 4: Redevelop existing lands and facilities to expand recreational opportunities - Improve trail network and increase trail use.

Finance

- Goal 1: Develop new funding initiatives to ensure the future economic sustainability of NVRPA - Generate additional revenue, develop partnerships, and grow the organization.
- Goal 2: Optimize current facilities and services to ensure improved future financial performance - Develop business plans and improve facility performance.
- Goal 3: Implement best business practices at NVRPA.

People

- Goal 1: Provide superior staff development opportunities - Provide excellent customer service.
- Goal 2: Facilitate a system that both motivates and evaluates - Evaluate employee performance, pay scales, and benefits packages.
- Goal 3: Leverage external resources to expand service capabilities - Increase volunteer and internship opportunities.

Messages

- Goal 1: Improve branding efforts to increase awareness of NVRPA as an organization - Improve market visibility using branding, media, and improved online capabilities.
- Goal 2: Increase and enhance excellence in NVRPA's many educational offerings.
- Goal 3: Become a national leader in the use of information technology to foster NVRPA's natural and historic interpretative efforts - Use social media and produce interactive websites and smart phone apps.

Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Master Plan Prepared by City of Fairfax Parks and Recreation Board and the Commission on the Arts Draft report March 27, 2000 (Never Adopted)

The Plan, the culmination of an eighteen month process, uses the 2020 Commission and the Task Force for a More Livable City of Fairfax as guides for its recommendations. The recommendations focus on four parks (Van Dyck, Providence, Kutner and Daniels Run) as well as trails, athletic facilities, cultural resources, historic properties, and a community center.

Recommendations:

Providence Park

1. Create two full-sized rectangular fields.
2. Line park perimeter with a walking trail.
3. Add recreational court.
4. Improve signage.
5. Provide lighted athletic field here or at Kutner Park.

Van Dyck Park

1. Maintain as family-oriented park.
2. Maximize open space.
3. Upgrade playground.
4. Consider youth-oriented recreation and open-air performing arts pavilion.

Kutner Park

1. Maintain as multi-use park.
2. Replace playground.
3. Improve signs and benches on trail.

Daniels Run

1. Create maintenance procedures for Daniels Run Trail extension and protection for Daniels Run stream in Farrcroft.
2. Construct cross country running trail between St. Andres and Estel Road trails.
3. Minimize tree cutting and harvesting with annual arborist inspection.

Fields

1. Add four 360' x 225' fields for soccer and lacrosse plus one or two for field hockey and rugby.
2. Add two baseball fields with 90' base paths and 325'-375' outfield distance plus four softball fields with 60' base paths and 275'-300' outfield distance (lighted for adult use).

Cultural Resources

1. Increase arts funding by using the City of Fairfax Foundation for the Arts for fundraising by seeking funds from the corporate, business, and art-related organizations.

2. Improve cooperation between organizations to increase stability and reduce program duplication.
3. Consider construction of a covered amphitheater of 1000 seats behind John C. Wood Center with private funding for outdoor presentations, festivals, and camps.

Community Center

Consider community center at Green Acres Elementary for a central recreation place, arts, and offices.

Final Report of the Task Force for a More Livable City of Fairfax Prepared by the Task Force for a More Livable City of Fairfax June 8, 1999

Report Summary:

This report provided a discussion of demographic changes occurring in the City of Fairfax at the time of the report (1999) and provided recommendations to address the negative consequences of these changes. The report mostly focused on the housing stock of the City, and what can be done to attract new residents including families.

The report described how more than 70% of the City's homes were built in the 1950s and 1960s, much higher than neighboring jurisdictions. As a result, the report described a number of efforts that might be used to help modernize the housing stock of the City of Fairfax. These efforts included: promoting civic associations (neighborhood associations) and changes to city ordinances to reduce traffic and the number of parked cars. The report also encouraged city led efforts for home renovation including: loan programs, City purchase and rehabilitation of distressed homes, and partnerships with private developers. Additionally, the report encouraged the redevelopment of Green Acres and Westmore Elementary School sites as upscale single-family detached neighborhoods.

Finally, the report described community amenities that homebuyers indicated they desired when deciding where to purchase including: natural opens spaces, walking and biking paths, and community recreation centers. The report made the following recommendations regarding recreation to address these deficiencies:

1. Address the shortage of ball fields by evaluating and considering possible locations of additional fields, and supporting regional efforts including ball fields at the GMU property at Braddock and Shirley Gate Roads.
2. Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a community recreational/cultural center with an olympic/competition pool at the John C. Wood Center.
3. Study the feasibility of developing a covered amphitheater.
4. Support City assistance in the operation and maintenance of neighborhood pools with open memberships.
5. City may eventually consider taking ownership of these facilities.
6. Support the revitalization and redevelopment of Old Town Fairfax, and the implementation of a plan that will facilitate safe and convenient pedestrian activity.
7. Sponsor at least two festivals each year for City residents (one at Old Town and one at Van Dyck Park).

**Community Appearance Plan for the City of Fairfax, Virginia
Prepared by the Department of Community Development and Planning
Adopted by City Council on April 26, 1994**

This Plan provides long range guidelines to examine and enhance community appearance characteristics, both natural and built. The Plan bemoans the post-war motor vehicle focused development with commercial strips, parking lots, and nondescript architecture, stating that such development served neither motorists nor pedestrians.

Guiding principles in the Plan include:

1. Attractive natural and built environment produces a better quality of life.
2. Open spaces should be preserved.
3. The City is best experienced while walking despite being shaped by the automobile.
4. Two focuses for improvements are Old Town Fairfax and City's corridors.

Old Town:

The Plan encourages creating an inviting pedestrian environment through open space, streetscape, and sidewalk improvements. It calls for the establishment of a series of gateways to signify arrival which would be part of open space system and include shrubs and paintings. A pedestrian orientation is encouraged, characterized by centralized parking, compactness of area, distinctive architecture, and pedestrian oriented shops. Open space, according to the Plan, should invite pedestrians through parks, plazas, and natural areas while announcing to motorists of entry to Old Town. Finally, the Plan recommends pedestrian scale street lighting, street furniture, street trees, and the relocation of overhead utilities underground to remove visual clutter and potential hazards to pedestrians.

Corridors:

The Plan makes recommendation for the City's major corridors, such as Lee Highway and Main Street. These areas should be made to look like boulevards with rows of trees on both sides as well as through the median. Additionally, the Plan encourages sidewalks on both sides of city corridors, preferable 6 feet or larger and at least 8 feet along designated bikeways with open space employed to provide tree cover and seating.

Mason to Metro Bicycle Route Project

**Prepared for the Mason-Metro Bicycle Task Group by Tyler Orton, Bicycle Programs Manager, George Mason University
Report February 2012**

In 2011, the Mason-Metro Bicycle Task Group was formed by George Mason University, the City of Fairfax, and the Metro to address bicycle connectivity between the University and Vienna Metro. While the distance between the two locations was only five miles, the Report states that no clear route between the two points exists. The Report discussed potential impacts, the process, route quality, and stakeholder interviews before presenting three alternatives, and finally making recommendations.

Potential Impacts

Improvement of bicycle conditions has a number of positive effects including reduced traffic congestion and emissions, benefits to local businesses, and increased use and enjoyment of parks and trails.

Process

The route suggestions were determined with consideration for all types of cyclists, from commuters to low-confidence riders. The Task Group rode the possible routes at a casual pace, multiple times at rush hour and collected and analyzed GPS data for these rides.

Qualities Considered

The task group considered 13 qualities for their recommendations:

1. Directness
2. Safety (Traffic, Terrain)
3. Amount of riding on bike paths (more is better)
4. Amount of riding on busy roads (less is better)
5. Amount of riding on residential roads (more is better)
6. Amount of riding on sidewalks (less is better)
7. Number of high traffic road crossings
8. Elevation change
9. Non paved riding surfaces
10. Non lit paths
11. Areas that are closed after dark
12. Width of shoulder
13. Bicycle parking

Stakeholder Interviews

In interviews, City of Fairfax staff made recommendations and expressed concerns to the Task Group. Staff wanted to take advantage of existing 21 miles of trails in Fairfax (10 miles of designated trails) and to assure that improvements served recreation needs in addition to bicycle commuter needs. Existing plans for the Pickett Road crossing and the Snyder Trail project were recommended to be incorporated into the route. It was also suggested that one route be chosen with a formal plan.

Route Considered

The Task Group outlined three possible routes to connect George Mason University with the Vienna Metro:

The Saintsbury Drive Route was a 4.72 mile ride with a travel time of about 26 minutes. This route was the most direct and needed fewer infrastructure changes than the other routes, but it also had the most riding on high traffic roads.

The University Drive Route was also 4.72 miles with a travel time of about 23 minutes. This route was the shortest of the three outlined in the report with most riding in residential areas but entailed a large amount of sidewalk riding on Rt. 50, many rolling hills, and a poorly connected, flood prone bike path connecting Five Oaks to Plantation Pkwy.

The Fairfax Parks Route was the longest of the three at 4.93 miles with a travel time of 31.5 minutes. However, this route was very safe with much less on-road riding on well-maintained

bike paths through many Fairfax parks while avoiding large elevation changes. In addition to being longer, the route had more road crossings, more decision points, and required more signs.

Recommendations

After outlining the costs associated with the recommended infrastructure for each route, the Task Group recommended developing two of the three routes in three phases with a Low Cost Base as a minimum to make the connection. The Group recommended starting with the Fairfax Parks Route because it was already bike friendly and was the least expensive to establish. A Follow-up Phase was suggested for the Saintsbury Drive Route with a WOW Phase that would complete all recommendations for these two routes.

City of Fairfax Environmental Sustainability 2013 Annual Report Published on February 18, 2014

The 2013 annual report addresses the following issues:

Stormwater:

The committee commends city staff efforts to address flooding and erosion problem in the Accotink Creek and the costs of compliance with regulations. The committee also recommends a coordinated effort between government and private stormwater activities to move from a drainage based to a management based approach for stormwater. Low Impact Development and private property stormwater management can help meet regulations.

Recycling:

The committee evaluated the City's recycling program and is working to initiate improvements. Recycling is proposed in the capital budget for heavily used parks.

Parks and Recreation Department Master Planning:

The committee details some concerns about City parks after their participation in Phase I of the strategic plan process. The committee is concerned about buffering and protecting streams, erosion and loss of vegetation, and invasive plants in addition to stormwater and impervious surfaces concerns.

The Work Plan for the committee continues the above efforts as well as supporting alternative energy use and tree protection.

Technical Assistance Tool: Fiscal and Economic Health

City of Fairfax

Prepared by Smart Growth America on July 17, 2013

This report presents the findings of a workshop of the same name. The focus of the report is the redevelopment of the Fairfax Boulevard corridor. In response to changing household preferences and business growth patterns as well as the infrastructure costs associated with suburban development, the report suggests focusing on walkable, mixed use development in one of the three nodes (Fairfax Circle, Northfax, or Kamp Washington). Their findings suggest offering an assortment of incentives to encourage developers to these areas. To serve these areas, new public spaces are needed on Fairfax Boulevard.

City of Fairfax Open Space Report

Published in March 2008

The report tells of city residents' approval through referendum of a fund to purchase and manage open space, leading to the establishment of the 10-member Open Space Citizen's Advisory

Committee which published a report in March 2001 identifying 21 parcels to target. As of the report, the city has purchased eight parcels, or 44 acres, at \$12.2 million.

City of Fairfax Task Force on Children and Families: Final Report and Recommendations to City Council.

Prepared for the Task Force on Children and Families Report July 11, 2006

On March 22, 2005, the City of Fairfax City Council adopted a resolution authorizing the creation of the Task Force on Children and Families consisting of members of City Council, PTA, School Board, and other interest groups. The groups goals were to develop a City-wide survey to assess citizen needs regarding the City's Parks and Recreation facilities and programs, sports leagues, and Teen Center; and the development of a "one stop shop" website for children and family offerings in the City.

Recommendations

After the survey was conducted and website was created, the Task Force made a series for recommendations to improve upon these and other services for children and families. The five recommendations were:

1. Provide the necessary resources to promote, maintain, expand, and enhance the Fairfax Family Website (www.fxfamilies.com).
 - Expand the website to include links to local youth groups and activities (4H clubs, Girl and Boy Scouts).
 - Allow online registration for events and connections to citizen services (tutoring, babysitting)
2. Ensure that the Monday Morning Children's Performance series has the resources necessary to continue
 - Work with the Commission on the Arts to promote the Children's Performance Series
3. Update and revise the City's Welcome Packet/Community Handbook to highlight resources, programs, and services available to children, teens, and families.
 - Better promote activities for children and families by including a cross section of City offerings (Teen Center, Summer Concert Series, FPYC sports program).
4. Create and host an annual Family/Business resource fair.
 - Connect family oriented businesses to local groups (schools, PTAs, 4-H programs, scouting programs).
5. Conduct a City-wide survey to assess the needs of City residents
 - Second phase to the Task Force survey with a larger sample and professional survey company (available in English, Spanish, and Korean).

Swimming Pool Advisory Committee Report

Prepared by Swimming Pool Advisory Committee in July 1986

This report describes the impacts, estimated costs, and possible location of an indoor pool for the City of Fairfax. The findings of the committee suggested no negative impacts on existing pools. After ruling out a pool on school property, they recommended the construction of a 50-meter enclosed swimming pool at the John C. Wood Municipal Complex at the cost of \$3 million,

operated by the Department of Recreation. The operating costs would come from school budgets for school programs and user-fees would cover other operating costs.

**Bikeway Program for the City of Fairfax, Virginia
Prepared by 1980 Bikeways Review Committee
Report July 1980**

This report is the result of a Fairfax City Council resolution in April 1980 in response to a 1973 report detailing the changing bicycle usage in the City. The resolution authorizes an annual funding of \$5000 for bicycle improvements.

General Recommendations:

1. Prioritize safety and combine with other improvement projects to reduce costs.
2. Encourage safe bicycling environment and consider in all arterial and thoroughfare construction or improvement.

City Budget Recommendations:

1. Use proper signing to ensure safety while discontinuing bike route segments at Routes 123 and 237.
2. Construct bike path from Layton Hall to Cornell Road.
3. Upgrade and replace existing trail surfaces in several locations.
4. Designate Class III bike route at segments of Stratford Avenue, Jones Street, University Drive, and Spring Lake Terrace.
5. Construct Class I bike trail along segments of Route 123 and Route 236 and from Spring Lake Terrace to Route 50.
6. Construct recreational trail from New Pickett Road to Accotink Trail.

Outside Funding Recommendations:

1. Construct bike trails to connect to Metro stations.
2. Extend Daniels Run Parks Trail to bike trail along New Pickett Road.

Future Trends Analysis

The Aging Population

Throughout the country, the average age of the population is increasing. The number of persons in the age group 65 and over is growing rapidly. Census data and state population data indicate that the percentage of the City of Fairfax population age 65 and older was 10.8% in 1990, 12.8% in 2000, and 13.7% in 2010 and is expected to increase to 15.9% in 2017. The numbers continually rise as the population increases. As indicated earlier in the Planning Context Section, the median age will rise from 33.6 in 1990 to 39.7 in 2017. The relative health of these individuals is better than ever before and the activities they desire are more active than in the past. The days of the old senior citizens centers where seniors play cards and do more sedentary activities is being replaced by incorporation into larger, more



active, community and recreation centers where individuals participate in fitness programs, walking, cardiovascular exercises, aerobics, and many other more active pursuits.

This trend encourages parks and recreation agencies to invest more in activities, programs, and facilities for the older population. This graying of America also generates demand for more paved walking trails, fishing areas, gardens, cultural and nature education, as well as other activities that are in demand for multiple age groups.

This data points clearly to the growing need to provide quality facilities and programs for this growing population as has been seen in attendance figures for the Young at Heart Senior Programs at the Green Acres Community Center. The Community Attitude and Interest Survey conducted by GMU, as well as all forms of the public engagement process, indicated very strong support from the community for improving the Green Acres Community Center. As stated earlier, this facility is inadequate to meet the needs of this growing population.

Indoor Recreation

The typical recreation center that included gymnasium space, locker rooms and a few other attractions have been replaced by much larger, multi-generational facilities that are described later in this text.

The newer facilities have a much stronger emphasis on fitness with aerobics rooms, free weights, exercise machines, cardiovascular areas, walking tracks, indoor swimming pools for both family oriented and lap swimming, lounges, concessions, and climbing walls, along with the traditional basketball and volleyball gymnasiums. These facilities may also include multipurpose rooms, which are used for a wide variety of indoor programming, such as arts and crafts, dance classes, and other community education programs.

The Stacy C. Sherwood Center and Green Acres Community Center provide some of these opportunities, but the more active pursuits take place in school gyms in Fairfax. The Community Attitude and Interest Survey performed by GMU indicated a moderate level of support for development of a new indoor recreation and fitness center.



Universal Access

Many park systems are developing unique facilities, (especially playgrounds) that are designed to go well beyond the minimum requirement for the Americans with Disabilities Act. By creating an environment that is totally accessible to persons of all ages and abilities, park system administrators are setting the best example for other organizations to follow. In the case of playgrounds, this results in playgrounds with several ground level activities, multiple ramps providing access to the decks, and the use of poured-in-place rubber surfacing. Examples of this type of facility are found at Stafford Drive Park and the Fairfax



County Park Authority's Clemyjontri Park Playground in McLean.

Several major facilities have developed trails utilizing paved, level surfaces that also have textured edging for the visually impaired. Fragrant plants and sensory gardens, interactive displays that allow a hands-on approach to education have also been developed to promote a better experience for special populations. While it may not be cost effective to develop this level of universal access at every playground facility, it is the practice of forward thinking recreation departments to install some destination facilities that are developed to this level.

Universal access applies to a lot more than playgrounds; it also applies to aquatic facilities, interpretive facilities, trails, access into buildings and access to all programs and facilities offered by the community. The strategies in this Plan clearly identify recommendations to develop more barrier-free parks.

Trails and Interconnectivity

This trend has been ongoing for a long time, and is still very important in nearly every community where surveys have been conducted. Communities that have extensive trail systems still have a strong desire to continually connect and link the trails to neighborhoods, schools, shopping areas, and other community facilities. These communities are very livable communities with a high quality of life. The need for trails for both recreational use and transportation was conveyed very clearly and strongly in all forms of the public input process.



Trails development received very high support in all forms of public input and the GMU survey indicated 82% of respondents indicated they were very or somewhat supportive of trails development. Paved trails ranked highest among facilities for which households have a need at 85% and adding sidewalks and trails ranked second on a question of improvements to existing parks.

Revenue Generation

With the advent of tightened budgets throughout the country, facilities that generate revenue have become increasingly popular because of their ability to offset some of the operating costs. Most notably, the increased use of concessions in parks and at other locations has improved the ability of the public sector to raise money. Multi-field complexes, in addition to miniature golf courses, carousels, paddleboats and canoe rentals and other creative applications have enhanced the community experience while lessening the tax burden. Summer camp programs and before-after school programs can also be a source of income for departments.

The City of Fairfax currently generates approximately 41% (as submitted to the Northern Virginia Park and Recreation Directors Survey; 34% on PRORAGIS) of its operating costs in fees. This figure is between the median and average of the Northern Virginia communities in the Directors survey of 40% and 42.8% respectively. Revenue generated in other communities in Northern Virginia ranged from 12% in Alexandria to 70% in Herndon.

Possibilities in Fairfax include fees from concessions at Providence Elementary School ball fields (if the complex is upgraded), tournaments at sports complexes and fees from indoor programming at a new indoor recreation and senior center.

Dog Parks

The construction of dog parks is an ongoing trend that has been sweeping the country in the last ten years. The development of fence enclosed areas where dogs can run leash free can be a positive addition to a community. Dog parks have proven to be good for improving the social interaction skills of dogs and have also been a very good social attraction for the dog owners. Quality dog parks need well-conceived planning. They also need a fairly extensive operating budget that includes staff time for maintenance and upkeep. A typical dog park will provide three areas of at least an acre each to allow for large dogs, small dogs, and an area for allowing an area to regenerate turf. Shade, sitting areas, water, and restrooms are typical amenities at these parks. Some communities have developed small dog parks in dense urban areas to supplement parks in larger parks.



Although dog parks ranked relatively low on the GMU survey, there is a contingency of dog owners promoting the concept. The future development of the Westmore School site is one possible location for such a facility.

Extreme Parks / Skate Parks

Due partly to the growth of extreme sports shown on television, the pursuit of extreme sports activities, especially by teenagers, has increased by hundreds of percent. Nearly every community that does not have a skate park has a very large contingent of teens and young adults that are strong advocates for skate park development. Other types of active pursuits in this park type include BMX tracks, mountain bike trails, climbing walls, as well as the skate parks. These activities appeal to a demographic that has decided not to be part of the traditional parks and recreation programming activities.



The communities that have developed successful skate parks will entice dozens of teens to gather in the park. These parks can actually be construed as teen oriented parks and should be supplemented with other facilities, such as basketball courts, sand volleyball courts, shade shelters, and snack bars.



The current skate park at Van Dyck Park was great when it was built 12 years ago. But now, the marketplace has resulted in much higher quality skate parks with elements that imitate urban plazas and that blend into the landscape, rather than fence enclosed areas. Concrete skate parks are also much quieter than the metal ramps offered at Van Dyck Park, which was an objection identified in the public input.

Fitness

We are reminded every day through the media that Americans are becoming less fit. There is a strong emphasis at the state to the federal levels to improve the fitness of individuals throughout the United States. Local park and recreation departments are building upon this message. They are probably the best organizations to make an impact in the overall fitness of the community through programs, promotions, and facilities that are available to the residents to improve their health and fitness.

The GMU survey respondents indicated adult fitness and wellness as the second highest need for programs. Many communities partner with health providers to offer fitness facilities and programs. Fitness facilities do not need to be confined to indoor spaces as modern elements can now be provided in outdoor environments that are similar to those seen typically in fitness centers, offering an alternative to the old fitness and par-course trails. Van Dyck Park may be an ideal location for these type of activities to supplement programs offered at the Stacy C. Sherwood Center. In addition, the development of a new indoor recreation a senior center will provide convenient opportunities for area residents to become more fit.



Economic Impact of Sports Tournaments

As mentioned in the revenue generation section, tournaments can be a revenue generator by exacting entrance fees and promoting concession sales. There is a trend to develop facilities that are of tournament level quality to attract better teams and better tournaments to the facilities. These high quality facilities offer a bonus for the local leagues and activities when not being used for tournaments. A balance does need to exist between local league use and use for tournaments.



Facilities must be designed to accommodate tournaments with larger parking lots, arrangement of fields in a cluster such as a wagon wheel configuration for baseball and softball fields. There must be quality restroom facilities, concessions, shade and other amenities throughout the park that make it a desirable place to spend the day or a weekend. The artificial turf fields at Draper Drive Parks and Stafford Park are potential for these activities, as are the baseball and softball fields at Providence Elementary School if upgraded. The proposed synthetic turf fields at Lanier Middle School could offer a tremendous potential due to the parking available at the school and other amenities at Kutner Park. The potential to have six high quality artificial turf fields in close proximity, plus two more at Oak Marr, could also for high level tournaments that would draw visitors from several states.

Synthetic Turf Athletic Fields

Fairfax is current with the trend of many school systems and municipalities that are developing synthetic turf fields to meet the ever increasing demand for soccer, football, lacrosse, rugby and other athletic pursuits. These are higher cost initially, but the ability to play on the fields continuously without the need to water, fertilize, mow, stripe, etc. is a maintenance savings to the community. The fields can be developed to be flat and can accommodate substantial rains

without damage to the surface. The fields are safer than overused grass fields. The main benefits of synthetic turf fields include:

1. Lower long term operating costs per event
2. Safer surfaces for athletes
3. Ability to schedule significantly more events on the same area versus natural grass fields
4. Ability to extend the season by allowing use earlier in spring and later in fall without damaging turf
5. Less rain outs
6. In communities with limited fields available, synthetic turf fields allow the maximum use on the same area
7. No need for watering, mowing, fertilizing or striping



Communities must consider the long term need to replace the carpet every 8 to 15 years, based upon the use of the field. The City of Fairfax has planned to replace the carpet at Fairfax High School in 2014 and two more fields are recommended in this Plan for Lanier Middle School.

Cultural Education

Fairfax has seen a dramatic rise in the quantity and percentage of people of diverse cultures as was identified in the demographics discussion in the Planning Context Section. As the population of cities and counties becomes more diverse, there is a strong desire for more heritage programs. There has also been an increase in participation in many programs for the visual and performing arts. These programs are becoming more common as program offerings initiated by parks and recreation departments increase.



Cultural education covers a lot of ground. It encompasses all of the arts, such as visual and performing arts, as well as heritage recognition. Communities become stronger when its citizens better understand their cultural links to the community.

This Plan provides strategies to work with the City’s Community Inclusion Task Force to integrate and encourage persons of varying nationalities to become engaged in community leadership, boards, and committees for events.

Environmental Education

The success of environmental education centers throughout the country, and the strong showing for the need for nature education in the surveys, indicate that there is a strong desire and need to better educate the public, and especially children, in natural processes, resource management and similar nature education activities. These work well in conjunction with the school systems to supplement their science curriculum. This “environmental education” develops a strong base of support for the large



expanses of open space and natural habitats that are owned by the county or municipality. Many park departments and commissions take an outreach approach by providing environmental curriculum to the schools in the form of nature center classes and activities. This tactic provides a method for promoting more use and appreciation of the parks. This is also an opportunity for the county park systems and universities to work closely with the municipal parks and recreation departments to provide a level of programming that the municipalities could not perform on their own.



The vernal pool at Kutner Park and the gardens at Daniels Run Elementary School are great examples of nature education near a school and park environment which build upon the school curriculum. This plan encourages partnerships with GMU, schools, FCPA and others to offer nature education programs in the local parks and through field trips to nearby Hidden Oaks Nature Center in Annandale.

Outdoor Family Oriented Aquatics

The older rectangle and L-shaped swimming pools had a very limited appeal. The desire to have 3 ½' depths of water for flip turns, or competition swimming, dictated a deeper water depth of the pool resulting in a lack of shallow water for younger children. Younger children were relegated to a “baby” pool, which really only appeals to tots, leaving the 4-10 year olds with no desire to visit the swimming pools.



The newer family aquatic centers are geared toward the entire family with zero depth access, shallow water, interactive water spray activities, along with the traditional competition lanes and diving boards. Newer aquatic facilities are also incorporating lazy rivers, which are popular with people of all ages. The newer facilities also provide large water slides. These elements, along with providing shade structures, larger grass beach areas, and quality concessions, have resulted in a complete turnaround in the operating costs for aquatic facilities. Whereas the older pools were a drain on the budget, the newer facilities are able to generate funds for the operations cost and some have even shown a surplus, which has been used to pay off some of the debt service for the capital construction. Where older pools have been renovated to include the newer features, communities have seen as much as a 200% increase in attendance. This demand provides an opportunity for charging higher fees which may result in a greater profit margin.

Another new concept that is sweeping the country is the development of splash pads or spraygrounds. These have replaced the wading pools at the aquatic facilities and are also developed as freestanding wet playgrounds in other park areas. Spraygrounds have several benefits in that, in most instances, they still recirculate the water, but because there is no standing water, there is no need for lifeguards. Therefore, the operation costs are considerably lower than for a swimming facility. Communities which have had several smaller neighborhood wading pools, have replaced them with spraygrounds to reduce operation costs while increasing interest and attendance.



The development of new swimming facilities in the City did not gain much support from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board due to the high cost of development and operations. Strategies have been recommended to promote nearby water parks that are open to the public as well as the private swim clubs in and near the City of Fairfax. An interactive water spray feature is planned for the new Downtown Park which will be under contract for construction in the very near future.

National Sporting Goods Association Trends Research

The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) conducts a survey every two years of 10,000 households throughout the United States. This sample is selected from 300,000 pre-recruited households. These surveys are used to generate a series of tables that identify trends in sports participation. The Nationwide Ten-Year History of Selected Sports Participation Table identifies the major activities that are surveyed through this study. The activities are listed by their rank order in the year 2010. For example, exercise/walking is the most participated activity at 95.8 million participants. This is followed by exercising with equipment at 55.3, and swimming at 51.9. The table shows baseball and soccer, as two of the most common activities requested as part of the study, as much lower on the list with 13.5 and 12.5 million participants respectively. When combining baseball and softball, it increases to a total of 23.3 million. The table indicates that for the ten year period surveyed, baseball and soccer have shown fluctuation, but overall have remained at a steady figure.

Appendix A – Planning Context

Table A- 7: Nationwide Ten-Year History of Selected Sports Participation

Participated more than once (in millions) Seven (7) years of age and older						
Sport	2010	2008	2006	2004	2002	2000
Exercise Walking	95.8	96.6	87.5	84.7	82.2	86.3
Exercising with Equipment	55.3	63.0	52.4	52.2	46.8	44.8
Swimming	51.9	63.5	56.5	53.4	53.1	60.7
Bicycle Riding	39.8	44.7	35.6	40.3	39.7	43.1
Aerobic Exercising	38.5	36.2	33.7	29.5	29.0	28.6
Hiking	37.7	38.0	31.0	28.3	27.2	24.3
Workout at Club	36.3	39.3	37.0	31.8	28.9	24.1
Running/Jogging	35.5	35.9	28.8	26.7	24.7	22.8
Fishing	33.8	42.2	40.6	41.2	44.2	49.3
Weight Lifting	31.5	37.5	32.9	26.2	25.1	24.8
Basketball	26.9	29.7	26.7	27.8	28.9	27.1
Soccer	13.5	15.5	14.0	13.3	13.7	12.9
Baseball	12.5	15.2	14.6	15.9	15.6	15.6
Tennis	12.3	12.6	10.4	9.6	11.0	10.0
Softball	10.8	12.8	12.4	12.5	13.6	14.0
Volleyball	10.6	12.2	11.1	11.8	11.5	12.3
Football (tackle)	9.3	10.5	11.9	8.6	7.8	7.5
Skateboarding	7.7	9.8	9.7	10.3	9.7	9.1
In-Line Roller Skating	7.4	9.3	10.5	11.7	18.8	21.8

SOURCE: National Sporting Goods Association, Mt Prospect IL 60056 847.296 NSGA FAX: 847.391.9827

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